

Re: OT: interesting global warming quote found elsewhere

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- *From:* Charlie E. <[edmondson@xxxxxxxx](mailto:edmondson@xxxxxxxx)>
  - *Date:* Tue, 05 Aug 2008 23:13:44 GMT
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On Tue, 05 Aug 2008 17:01:48 -0500, Kris Krieger <[me@xxxxxxxx](mailto:me@xxxxxxxx)> wrote:

Eeyore <[rabbitsfriendsandrelations@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:rabbitsfriendsandrelations@xxxxxxxxxxxx)> wrote in [news:4898C376.F6B4C48@xxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:4898C376.F6B4C48@xxxxxxxxxxxx):

Kris Krieger wrote:

Business survives by \*both\* solving short term problems, (\*and\* doing analysis to determine where long-term problems might occur and then coming up with strategies that will form a framework for developing tactics to solve them should/when they arise.

But that fact seems to be lost on an increasing number of businesses. It almost seems as though the more fancy MBA degrees are being obtained, the less actual business sense is out there. And I don't understand it. Are people actually getting stupider, or is it just that they 1) just don't much care, and/or 2) no longer have any idea how to make rational, as opposed to purely emotional/knee-jerk/myopic, decisions?

I couldn't agree more about that whole MBA business. I suspect the whole principle of the MBA is fundamentally wrong. You SHOULD have to work your way up from the shop floor or whatever, not swim in to the

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board room saying you know everything already.

Graham

When I'd worked "for the government", at a time during Bush the Elder's term, we got in an assistant section (and this was a technical/science section) manager with an MBA whose previous job experience had been – I'm not kidding – running the Shoe Department at a local Sears. The "agency heads" had decided that Intelligence was a "product/commodity", and that a user of intel was a "customer". So if one agency got stuff and passed it to another, the former was the "producer" and the latter was the "customer". If the phrase "total cluster fv<k" is coming to your mind, you've got the idea. Now, to his credit, our new guy \*did\* put a lot of effort into trying to learn what the heck it was that us Worker Bees did, but the attempt to force "business theory modelling" onto a bunch of analyst–linguists was sheer lunacy. Productivity dropped because, as in business, it got to where there so many damn meetings, and they accomplished nothing other than interrupting the work that was supposed to be getting done.

Anyhoo, given my conversations with various competent upper–level managers in the pharmaceutical and biotech world, one major part of the problem in business is that that the people running a department no longer hire the people who will work for them – it's mostly done through "human resources", who, from what I've heard, often use op–scan machines to look for keywords in resume's. A good human manager can often sense the extent to which a resume' is BS, but an opscan machine can't. Another problem is meetings. THEN there is micro–management – which ends up only managing insignificant details, to the detriment fo the business as a whole. Then too, I'm reminded of the story of the guy on the Board of Directors who literally had no idea what the company (that he was supposedly helping direct) actually did – as in, "Oh, \*biotech pharma\* – so \*that's\* what you guys do!" (And you are of course supposed to suck it up and listen to that with a straight face, smiling and nodding politely and joyously...)

My Dad had worked in a major pharma company, and saw the whoel process of de–evolution that occurred when the company became top–heavy with "fresh young go–getter" MBA types – who held endless meetings, did endless paperwork, and eventually laid off so many people who were actually \*doing work\*, that production fell and the company just about tanked.

In part, everyone wants to be a highly–paid manager, an nobody wants to deal with actual production. It's bureaucratization – when a bureaucracy, \*any\* bureaucracy, becomes an inverted pyramid, it ceases doing less and less of anything productive, and increasing works mainly to expand itself, sucking up ever–more resources – eventually employing so many people that, even tho' it doesn't \*do\* anything, the bureaucracy

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can't simply be disbanded because the ensuing unemployment would be an economic disaster. IMO, this is where most of gov.t is, and that's where many companies either are, or soon will be.

That's why I always say that the gov.t can't be looked to to take actions that will solve anything. What the gov.t can do is regulate processes so that 1) a level playing field is maintained, which in turn 2) "greases the wheels", helps keep one player from seizing up the works by screwing with the machinery. The mortgage mess is an example – once the gov't allowed mortgages to be sold and bought like cabbages, the people who brokered mortgages had no reason whatsoever to be sure that the loans were good ones – i.e. honest loans made to people who would be able to pay the loans off. The gov.t made a bipartisan effort to basically allow a few individuals within a few companies screw with the machinery of the entire nation, whose economy has long been entwined with housing and mortgages.

IMO, that's one of many symptoms of the "all majors, no grunts" psychology that's currently rampant – too many people delusionally believe themselves "entitled", by the mere fact that they breathe, eat, and pee, to being a major rather than a grunt. The problem is that this sort of so-called "thinking" rejects the value of experience. OK, not all production types can be managers, obviously – but a \*good\* manager is always \*open\* to receiving ideas from those who are being managed. And I've seen little to show me that the MBA types referenced in both the original post, and your reply, have any \*clue\* as to the importance of listening to the people who are actually doing the job that's to be managed. Few leaders – IMO fewer than ever – understand Leadership-with-a-capital-L...

Well, I have to agree with you on this one Kris!

At this point, if I were purchasing one of these big corporations, the FIRST thing I would do is fire any manager who had an MBA, at least one from the last 15 years. Those guys have basically been taught that it doesn't matter what you do to produce, it only matters what your financials are. Any manipulation or lie that accomplishes that goal is perfectly alright...

Case in point – Two very good managers that I knew, both with great engineering knowledge and good people skills went and got themselves MBAs. The next thing you know, they are backing and pushing globalization and coming up with 'tiered' support models that resulted in the layoffs of 80% of their personnel, and looks like will soon result in bankruptcy of a formerly largest in the industry company.

I just wish I didn't still own stock in them... :-(

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Charlie Edmondson

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